2025 GUIDE

The Public Sector Freelance Guide

How Freelancers and Government Organisations Can Find, Connect and Succeed Together

Published by Bij Oranje | www.bijoranje.nl

WHAT IS INSIDE:

- Why government work pays 20-25% more than private sector equivalents
- The 3 myths keeping talented freelancers away from public sector work
- Step-by-step guide to landing your first government contract
- How HR teams build smarter contingent workforce strategies
- Key data, practical framework and action checklist

Introduction

The public sector freelance market is one of the most stable, well-paid and underutilised opportunities in the European labour market. Yet despite its scale and accessibility, most freelance professionals have never seriously explored it -- and most government organisations are still sourcing contingent talent through processes built for a different era.

This guide exists to close that gap. It is written for two audiences simultaneously: the freelance professional who has never considered government work, and the HR or talent acquisition leader inside a government organisation who knows their sourcing process is broken but has not yet found a practical framework for fixing it.

> The Netherlands alone has over 1.2 million registered ZZP (self-employed) professionals and more than 700 active government interim vacancies at any given moment. The supply and the demand both exist. What has been missing is the right connection infrastructure -- and the awareness on both sides to use it.

Whether you are a freelancer looking for your first government contract or an HR professional trying to build a more strategic contingent workforce capability, the frameworks, data and practical steps in this guide are designed to be immediately applicable.

1.2M+	700+	20-25%	50%+
ZZP professionals in the Netherlands	Active govt. vacancies per month	Rate premium vs. permanent roles	Faster time-to-fill with specialist platforms

Sources: CBS Statistics Netherlands 2024, Staffing Industry Analysts 2024

Part One: For Freelancers

Why Government Work Should Be in Every Freelance Portfolio

Most freelancers run their business on instinct and momentum. They find clients through their network, deliver good work, get referrals and build something that resembles stability. Until a retainer gets cancelled, a startup runs out of funding or a budget gets frozen mid-project.

The feast-or-famine cycle is not inevitable. It is a sourcing strategy problem -- and one of the most effective solutions is adding at least one government anchor client to your portfolio.

The Three Myths Keeping You Away

Myth	Reality
"Government work means showing up to an office daily"	Post-pandemic, a significant share of public sector interim roles in IT, policy, legal and finance are now hybrid or fully remote.
"The application process is too complicated"	Compliance requirements are mostly a one-time setup cost of a few hours. Once done, they apply to every future application.
"You need to be a big agency, not an individual"	Dutch government bodies routinely engage individual ZZP professionals directly. Specialist platforms are built exactly for this.

What Government Clients Actually Offer

- **Contractual reliability.** Payment arrives on schedule, on contract, every time.
- **Predictable scope.** Projects are budgeted and approved before you are engaged.
- **Strong rates.** CBS data: 20-25% above permanent role equivalents.
- **Interesting work.** Complex, meaningful assignments with real societal impact.
- **Professional respect.** Government clients treat independent professionals as specialists.
- **Built-in referral network.** Government refers within government.

"When you are not anxious about income, you negotiate better rates with every other client. You take on more interesting work. You build a business instead of just surviving a series of contracts."

How to Land Your First Government Contract

Follow these four steps in order. Each one builds on the previous.

Step 1

Get Your Administrative Documents in Order

Before applying for anything, prepare: KvK (Chamber of Commerce) registration, current professional liability insurance, Verklaring Omtrent Gedrag (certificate of good conduct) and any relevant sector certifications. Missing one of these gets your application rejected immediately regardless of how strong your experience is. Do this once -- it applies to every future application.

Step 2

Use a Specialist Platform

Government interim vacancies live on specialist platforms, not on LinkedIn or Indeed. In the Netherlands, Bij Oranje aggregates hundreds of live government assignments from municipalities, provinces and national bodies -- filterable by skill, region, hours and rate. Their dedicated ZZP intermediary service is available at: **bijoranje.nl/zzpbemiddeling**. Set up a weekly alert. The best roles fill within two to three weeks of publication.

Step 3

Write an Application That Leads With Their Problem

Read the brief carefully. Behind the procurement language is a specific problem the organisation needs to solve. Open your application with a clear demonstration that you understand that problem and have solved something comparable before. Let your credentials follow as evidence -- not as the headline. This one change alone separates shortlisted applications from discarded ones.

Step 4

Move Within 48 Hours

Speed is a sourcing strategy. The freelancers who consistently win government contracts are the most prepared, not always the most experienced. Have your documents ready. Have a template application framework you can adapt quickly. Review vacancies every Monday morning and respond within 48 hours of finding a strong match.

After the First Contract: Government organisations refer within government. One successful engagement generates pipeline for the next. Your private sector clients also respond differently when government contracts are in your portfolio -- it signals credibility, compliance readiness and professional seriousness that commands better rates.

Part Two: For Government HR Teams

Why Your Contingent Workforce Strategy Is Broken -- And How to Fix It

Contingent workers represent 30 to 40 percent of the average enterprise workforce globally, according to Staffing Industry Analysts. In the Dutch public sector, interim professionals fill critical capacity gaps in every department from IT to legal to policy. Yet most government HR systems manage these workers as if they were invisible.

Three Symptoms of a Broken Strategy

- **Reactive sourcing under pressure.** Every hire starts with urgency. No talent pool. No system. Just scrambling.
- **Inconsistent classification.** Worker status decisions made case-by-case without a documented framework.
- **Zero performance data.** Permanent employees generate reviews. Contingent workers generate invoices.
- **Wrong sourcing channels.** Generalist job boards for specialist roles produces generalist candidate pools.

Government organisations looking for a structured recruitment and selection partner can explore Bij Oranje's dedicated service at: **bijoranje.nl/werving_and_selectie** -- built specifically around public sector hiring needs.

Three Fixes HR Teams Can Implement This Quarter

Fix	What It Involves	Impact
Build a pre-verified talent pool	Maintain a database of previously engaged or screened contingent professionals. Before launching a search, check the pool first.	50% reduction in time-to-fill for repeat roles
Create a classification framework	Document a standard decision tree for worker classification aligned with applicable legislation. Make it mandatory for every engagement.	Eliminate misclassification risk and improve audit readiness
Track post-engagement performance	Capture structured feedback from hiring managers at the close of every assignment.	Build an evidence base for which agencies and individuals deliver

> ***"A compliant engagement that is not documented inside your HRMS is not actually compliant -- it is just compliant until someone asks to see the paperwork."***

Your Action Checklist

For Freelancers:

- ■ KvK registration current and active
- ■ Professional liability insurance in place
- ■ Verklaring Omtrent Gedrag obtained
- ■ Specialist platform account created and job alert set
- ■ Application template framework prepared
- ■ Weekly vacancy review scheduled (Monday mornings)
- ■ First application submitted within 48 hours of finding a match

For Government HR Teams:

- ■ Pre-verified contingent talent pool documented and maintained
- ■ Worker classification framework documented and legally reviewed
- ■ Post-engagement performance tracking process in place
- ■ Specialist sourcing platforms added to sourcing mix
- ■ Assignment briefs include a practitioner-focused problem statement section
- ■ Compliance verification front-loaded before vacancy publication
- ■ Contingent workforce ROI reportable to CFO in financial terms

About Bij Oranje

Bij Oranje is the Netherlands' leading specialist platform connecting ZZP freelance professionals with public sector organisations. With hundreds of live government vacancies across municipalities, provinces and national bodies at any given moment, Bij Oranje is where Dutch government freelance work happens.

Whether you are a freelancer looking for your next government assignment or a government organisation building a smarter contingent workforce strategy, Bij Oranje provides the infrastructure, the talent pool and the compliance framework to make it work.

www.bijoranje.nl

Sources: CBS Statistics Netherlands (2024) | Staffing Industry Analysts (2024) | McKinsey Global Institute (2024) | Adecco Group Workforce Trends (2024) | SHRM Contingent Workforce Benchmarks (2024) | Upwork Freelance Forward (2024)

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